

# THE LEDGER PICK-AXE

SMSA'S STUDENT NEWS SOURCE

MARCH 2026

## Ledgers Enjoy Spring Break Extension

Sophia Loehr

Back-to-back snow days are rare but loved. Whether students enjoy them with actual snow play, relaxation, or spending time with family, they are an excellent time to unwind. Due to the two consecutive snow days in March, SMSA unexpectedly extended its spring break, which was appreciated by students, faculty, and staff. The determined effort to clear the parking lot and roads was appreciated.

Students who were returning from vacations were able to rest and recuperate after their travels.

Senior Anilú Moreno shared, "I took advantage of the days and relaxed after a long spring break trip. I spent time with friends and family and caught up on

schoolwork." Sophomore Clayton Ottery combined productivity with relaxation. "The only notable stuff I did besides sitting around was swimming and recording some practice for the musical," he noted. Senior Ephraim O'Brien spent the snow days with a similar blend of activities, remembering, "I shoveled the driveway, did laundry, played guitar, and studied for the musical most importantly; and when I was bored, I played *Hollownight Silksong* on the PS5."

Completing assignments and chores is a very practical and useful way to spend a snow day. Snow days are not always surrounded by practical ideas though; there are many

superstitions about how to make a snow day happen. Some of the most fun and well-known strategies include wearing pajamas inside-out and flushing ice cubes

down the toilet the night before. It has even been suggested that there will be an inch of snow for every ice cube that you flush.

Several indoor and outdoor pastimes were also popular activities. "I played cards and watched movies with my family," shared junior Kadence

Krause. For senior Stephanie Salas, the snow days held both enjoyable and sentimental

moments. She shared, "For one of the last times ever, I got to go sledding with my best friends, and it was a good

opportunity to catch up with them after a long spring break!"

Students enjoyed their snow days, socializing, relaxing, working, and taking advantage of their free time, and they are ready to welcome the next snow day whenever it arrives.



Sianna Feucht, Stephanie Salas, Anilú Moreno, and Sophia Loehr enjoyed a day of sledding

## SPORTS FEATURE

## Springs Sports Preview

### Girls Soccer

Bellana Weaver

With the spring season rolling in, the cold slowly and painfully drifts away, and new sports come into play, one of those being girls soccer. Nobody likes being out in the cold competing with team after team of aggressive girls; and certainly, nobody wants to kick a ball around a wet and soggy field.



Senior Stella Vande Slunt

However, that is not how our players see it. Defender Megan Taylor tells us it is the perfect season for soccer, no matter how unpredictable it is. "Since we live in Wisconsin, you really never know what you're going to get for the weather," she explained. "So, it keeps us on our feet, ready to adapt at a moment's notice. Once we get into later seasons, it starts giving us that perfect temperature that you don't get in the fall."

Spring, however, is not all rain and cold temperatures, as there is always beautiful weather leading up to Easter.

**Continued on Page Four**

### Softball

Gwyneth Haubenschild

Who needs to travel to a Brewers game when we can all go to the SMSA girls softball games right here in Fond du Lac!?! You can try tailgating before the game as well. This season, the team consists of 11 players led by Coach Tom Walentoski. Although they are a small team in numbers, they are using that to their advantage, encouraging each player to be flexible and learn multiple positions on the field.

Seniors Claire Knowles and Gabi Rademann both started playing softball at the age of four. They are looking forward to the

upcoming season, hoping to lead the team with their years of experience. Claire noted, "My goal for the team is to grow together as a team and have fun!" "Playing any sport is so much more fun when you have a great community around you who supports each other," added Gabi. So, let's all get out to the SMSA Girls softball games and cheer them on!



Seniors Claire Knowles and Gabriella Rademann

## Reboots: Boring or Brilliant?

Audrey Bonen

Many networks have been producing reboots and sequels of popular movies and TV shows instead of creating new stories for audiences. Disney is a significant example of this, with programs like *Moana 2* (2024) or the *Hannah Montana 20th Anniversary Special* (2026).

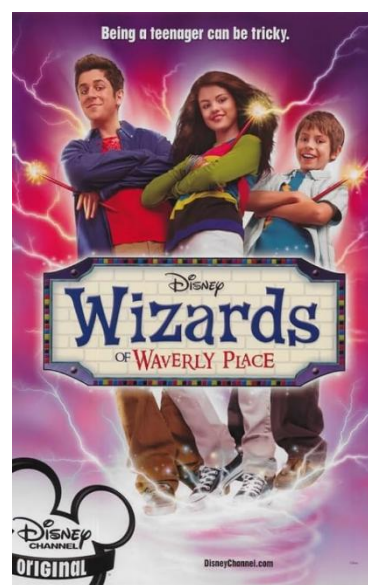
Spectators can see this as either lazy or nostalgic. Emma Koelbl, freshman, was asked how she feels about the reboots, and she responded, “It keeps the story going, and I like being able to watch more of what will happen.” Freshman Lauren Pelz added, “I think that while it is not always as good or creative, it is fun to see the character we know and love in new settings or in different styles.”

Disney has been known as a children’s network for years; however, they have more recently been targeting an older audience, creating sequels like *Wizards Beyond Waverly Place*, which aired in 2024. The original TV show, *Wizards of Waverly Place* aired from late 2007 to early 2012. When asked if she feels that Disney should be appealing more toward the younger audience (like Gen Z or Gen Alpha), Lauren responded, “I think a good Disney story is relatable to both kids and adults. If Disney tries to make it too much for the younger audience, it could make it less enjoyable for adults.” Emma reinforced this, stating, “There needs to be an in-between for both ages, old and young.”

Lauren was asked if she believes there are certain movies or TV shows that shouldn’t be remade. “If the original was really good, then it sets the bar high for sequels,” she shared. This can make some seem very disappointing. If you’re going to do a reboot or sequel, you will have to do it well.”

Overall, reboots and sequels get the attention of the

older generation to reminisce on their comfort TV shows and movies; however, they can seem boring or redundant to those same audiences. Younger audiences can still enjoy these programs, although it *can* seem lazy as networks aren’t coming up with new storylines and characters - they are just reusing old and adored characters.



## Spring Musical *Grease* a Success

Lauren Pelz

From March 20th-22<sup>nd</sup>, SMSA performed the musical *Grease*. Set in the 1950s, *Grease* follows the romance of cool greaser, Danny Zuko, and good girl, Sandy Dumbrowski, along with their respective friends, the T-Birds and Pink Ladies, as they navigate the experience of high school. This popular musical features a rock and roll soundtrack, with songs like “Summer Nights,” and “Greased Lightnin',” as well as fun dance scenes like “Hand Jive.”

The ten weeks leading up to the shows were filled with lots of both fun and challenges. “My

favorite part of the musical was making a lot of friends and getting to spend every day with them learning how to put on a show, succeeding, and failing together,” shared senior Jack Pelz, who



The cast and crew of *Grease*

played Danny Zuko. Putting on a show is far from easy, requiring

lots of hard work and determination. “I enjoyed learning all the choreography,” revealed Audrey Bonen. “It was so fun watching everyone learn and perform it.”

While the actors get all the spotlight, the stage crew plays a

significant part in making the musical happen. “My role involves making sure that all the props and actors are where they need to be for the upcoming scene,” stage manager Carly Masarik explained. “I also help Mrs. Lewis with anything she needs.” Members of the stage crew need to always know what's going on and be able to adapt when something inevitably doesn't go according to plan. Fabulous job to all those involved in the musical and thanks to everyone who supported by coming to the shows!

## The Importance of Divine Mercy Sunday

Isabella Theel

When you consider the Easter season, you are likely to think of Christ's resurrection from the dead. While Easter Sunday is a time of holy and secular celebration around the world, the Catholic Church continues to rejoice in Easter long past the egg hunt. In fact, the Easter season is one of the longest liturgical seasons, second only to ordinary time. During this joyful season, the Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday, which falls on the second Sunday of Easter.

Divine Mercy Sunday serves as a gentle nudge to remind sinners of Christ's great mercy and love for them, encouraging them to receive the Lord's forgiveness through the sacraments of Reconciliation and

Holy Communion. In the 1930s, during a time when ideologies such as Nazism and communism began to take hold of the world, Jesus entrusted St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun, to establish an observance of a Feast of Mercy. Through personal encounters, which St. Faustina recorded in her diary, Jesus explained his desire to pour out mercy to all who sought his forgiveness through Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and for this desire to be celebrated on the second Sunday of Easter. In Jesus's own words, recorded in St. Faustina's diary, he explained, "I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, especially for poor sinners." Shortly after St. Faustina's

canonization on May 5, 2000, the Vatican decreed that the second Sunday of Easter would henceforth be known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

In addition to the observance of a Feast of Mercy, Jesus also gave St. Faustina The Chaplet of Divine Mercy, along with a promise revealing the depth of his mercy, saying, "Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death... Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from my infinite mercy." Jesus further instructed St. Faustina to encourage people to recite the chaplet through The Divine Mercy Novena, which begins on Good Friday and ends

the Saturday prior to Divine Mercy Sunday. For more information on how to pray the Novena, check out [thedivinemercy.org](http://thedivinemercy.org).

Throughout the joy of the Easter season, Christ, especially through Divine Mercy Sunday, invites the world to fully partake in his great love and forgiveness. During a time of rejoicing, the call to return to the Father with a clean and open heart rings loudly, especially on the second Sunday of Easter.



### Continued from Page One

Freshman Emma Koelbl added, "It's something I have to persevere through and challenge myself, so I like experiencing spring weather."

Even though the weather never sticks to the personal preferences of the players, that would never stop them from playing. Most of them find soccer to be a special sport, and they each enjoy it in their own ways, no matter how taxing practices can be. "The first few practices of high school soccer have been a lot more intense than rec soccer," explained freshman Lily Anderson, "but I like how hard Coach pushes us, and I think we are a really good team of hardworking girls. The expectations are high, and it's been difficult to adjust, but I know that with more time, I'll become

more comfortable. We support each other in all circumstances, and our captains make sure that practices and games are always fun and active."

Still, there's one downside to playing any sport in the spring: it gets closer and closer to the end of the year when our seniors leave! The players with the most high school experience in soccer will surely be missed, but while they're here, we can appreciate everything they do to benefit the team. Captain Morgan Nachreiner— along with all the other captains and seniors— keeps the team's morale positive with a clear goal of helping the team learn more about the game. "I have stepped into a leadership role as a captain, and the team is transitioning smoothly into the season," she shared. "We are looking ready for our first few games with all the help of the

coaches and experienced players."

Throughout their lives, most of these girls have had many good memories with the sport, and it would be hard to imagine their lives without it. "Soccer is fun and special to me because my older sister used to play, and she's been my inspiration," commented Emma. "I play because soccer has been a part of my life since I was six, and it's something I hope to carry on much longer."

Many of the players can relate to Emma's long-term experiences in playing soccer. "I've been playing soccer since I was six, and I really enjoy playing with my friends and enjoying time around our team," added Lily. Even the older players wouldn't ever want to give up soccer. Megan has also been playing since she was young and shared that "it's not just playing that's

special, it's being able to connect with girls who I haven't talked to before and forming bonds with them. I think the thing that pushes me to keep playing is the friends I've made through the years."

There is a clear connection between each and every one of the players that draws out the love and support they offer each other. "Not every season is perfect," Megan explained, "but the connections I've made with some of the girls keep me going— not only for myself, but for them as well." The real reason they play isn't for personal gain. They love to see the progress of the entire team each season, watching themselves grow and become more skilled. The sense of community of the team motivates them to strive. Therefore, it wouldn't be an enjoyable sport without the fun each player brings to the field.

# Havah Fleisner Uses Pageant Platform to Uplift Visually Impaired

Annabelle Seel

At just 17 years old, senior Havah Fleisner has worn many crowns. From Miss United States of America Teen to the current Miss Northern Lights Teen to competing this summer for Miss America Teen. Wearing a sparkly dress and shiny tiara is every little girl's dream, but Havah's pageant titles are about more than the glitter on the surface. Havah is legally blind, yet she seems to handle every curveball life throws her way with grace and poise. Her pageant platform is her vehicle to break barriers and raise awareness for those who are visually impaired.

Havah has a rare genetic eye disease called Stargardt Macular Degeneration. "My central vision is completely blurry, but my peripheral vision is a little bit more clear. I'm legally blind and color blind," she explained. Due to this condition, Havah faces struggles in her ordinary life that other teens might never think about. She cannot drive or read small text, and she experiences difficulties with new faces and places.

After struggling to keep up in athletics because of her eye disease, Havah was encouraged by her mom (who won Miss Fond du Lac in 2005) to try pageantry as an extra-curricular. She competed in her first pageant in 2023 and won, being crowned USOA Miss Wisconsin Teen. She

went on to win USOA Miss United States Teen the summer after her sophomore year. Currently, Havah holds the Miss Northern Lights Teen title and hopes to continue competing within the Miss America Organization, sharing that the number one skill she has gained from competing in pageants is public speaking. "My interviewing skills have gotten a lot better," she added. "I can talk about the most difficult conversations but keep



it very civil and not lean towards anything, especially political conversations."

Competing in pageants has offered Havah a way to redefine her biggest obstacle. Her public visibility allows her to advocate for and support others suffering from vision loss. "When I was little, I didn't know anyone who



was legally blind," she shared. "The first time I met someone with the same eye disease as me was just a couple months ago." Her platform is all about "empowering the visually impaired community and showing them that they are capable of doing anything and using my story as a voice for them to look up as a role model," she explained.

Providing that role model for those who have vision loss comes with some incredible opportunities. Havah has spoken to the Carroll Center for the Blind in Boston and Ascidian, a research group searching for cures to Stargardt's. "I'm going to Washington and New York the

week before my state pageant. I'm lobbying in Washington, D.C. for federal legislation to pass a bill for funding for eye screenings in schools. Then I fly from Washington to New York to be a keynote speaker at a legally blind gala. From there, I come back, compete at state, and then I go on a book tour." Havah has written her first children's book, titled *The Letter E* after the only letter she could read on a vision screening chart, to be

published and released soon. It's safe to say Havah is booked and busy with opportunities to uplift and inspire others.

Outside of school activities and pageantry, Havah enjoys reading and spending time with her siblings. "I'm a bookworm. I love audiobooks!" Havah said. She encourages others to get involved in pageants or other activities that motivate and encourage others. "I would have never done a pageant unless my mom made me, but now I can talk about my eye disease and not be embarrassed of it. It's the little things, the little skills that you learn by pushing yourself out of your comfort zone because it gives you that confidence you would have never gotten if you didn't."

## Thank you to our Pick-Axe Staff!

Students: Audrey Bonen, Gwyneth Haubenschild, Carson Kaufman, Sophia Loehr, Lauren Pelz, Isabella Theel, Annabelle Seel, Bellana Weaver

Teachers: Mrs. Sales and Mrs. Besson